

2017 Volunteer Program Review

STAFF REPORT

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Successes	4
Current Goal Status	5
Program Costs	7
Goals for 2017	8
Future	8

Executive Summary

Since taking responsibility for the volunteer program in 2013, I have struggled to fully realize the scope of it. I have looked at the program in limited snapshots, focusing on only one aspect at a time. This view has had limited benefits and has resulted in the organization being reactive instead of proactive.

This year, I have evaluated the program more globally, from multiple perspectives including:

- Successes of the program
- Status of the goals of the program
- The cost of the program
- The future of the program

It is my hope that this report provides a broader picture to staff and to the Board.

It will not be possible to digest this report in its entirety in one sitting. Therefore, I recommend staff and board members prepare to discuss it further during our next workshop.

Successes of the Program in 2017

2016 brought much success for individuals in the volunteer program. Five members obtained job offers in fire departments (including Fire District 6). An additional four members have been hired in our local hospitals or AMR.

The program also had success with the Clark County Fair. Volunteers logged 800 hours of coverage at the fairgrounds fire station, the high hazard events at the grandstands and the first-aid booth.

Other events the volunteers participated in include:

FD6 Open house	WSU Graduation	Poster Contest
Klineline Fishing Derby	Dozer Days	CRHS Hands Only CPR
PUD Idea Fair	CRHS Football Games	Earth Day
Healthy Kids Fair	Station 151 Open House	Storm City Roller Derby
Chucks Pancake Breakfast	CRESA Community Expo	Read Across America
Gaiser Career Day	Santa's Posse	Parade of Bands
	Veteran's Day Parade	

Current Goal Status for the Volunteer Program

The Board, staff and the Volunteer Coordinator have established goals for the program. As the Operations Chief, it is my responsibility to drive the program toward meeting these goals.

These goals include:

- Staff Station 151 40% of the time
- Provide 24 hours of service per month, per member
- Attend a minimum of 75% of scheduled drills per quarter
- Respond to emergency callback

The Volunteer Program and I meet on a regular basis to evaluate the performance of the program. Reports are extracted, deficiencies are noted and accountability discussions are held. Volunteer officers meet with the Volunteer Coordinator quarterly and with the Operations Chief semi-annually.

Unfortunately, I have not had success meeting the objectives set before me.

Goal 1: Staff Station 151 40% of the time

It would be beneficial to clarify between two understandings of this objective:

1. Staff Station 151 40% of the hours of operation.
Framed this way, one must consider staffing the station 24 hours per day, 365 days per year.
2. Staff Station 151 to ensure 40% of the calls are covered.
If this is the true objective, analysis of peak call volumes could reveal a smarter staffing plan.

Status: unsatisfactory

In 2016, crews covered station 151's response area 2,119 out of 8,760 hours or 24%. Crews would have needed to cover an additional 1,385 hours to meet 40% coverage of 3,504 hours.

In 2016, crews covered 87 out of 375 calls for service in 151's first due area of Fire District 6, equaling 23%. Crews would have needed to cover 63 additional calls to meet the objective of 150.

Goal 2: Provide 24 hours of service per month

Part of the volunteer agreement is that members provide 24 hours of service per month. These hours may be a combination of callback, Station 151 coverage, ride-outs with duty crews, public education events, community events, EMS standby, training sessions, etc.

Status: unsatisfactory

We are not currently tracking this information in a reportable fashion. Anecdotally speaking, only a minority of the volunteer members are completing 24 hours of service per month.

We will enforce that members utilize Firehouse to track activities so data is more readily accessible.

Goal 3: Attend a minimum of 75% of drills

Volunteer firefighter drills are scheduled each Monday night from 1830 – 2130 (usually 48 times per year) except holidays. Volunteer EMS drills are scheduled one Monday per month from 1900 – 2100 (usually 10 times per year) except holidays. To remain in good standing, volunteer members must attend 75% of these scheduled drills.

Status: unsatisfactory

64% of all volunteers achieved the minimum requirement for drill attendance. Fire volunteers fared better with 82% while EMS volunteers met the requirement only 44% of the time.

The training division intends to offer additional drills approximately 10 times per year to help members attain the 75% attendance requirement. The results of this trial will be reviewed near the end of 2017.

Goal 4: Respond to emergency callback

Volunteer members are asked to respond to backfill stations when duty crews are dispatched to working structure fires or other events where it is anticipated they will be on-scene for greater than one hour.

Status: unsatisfactory

Three different technologies are now used by the Fire District to alert and communicate with members. Active911 is an app available to all members to alert them to emergencies. PulsePoint is another app that alerts members that a cardiac arrest is occurring near them. It also serves as an alert for all other calls dispatched within the district as well as a hear-only radio. Finally, CrewSense is an app the fire district uses to alert members for specific emergent and non-emergent needs. Each of these technologies is provided to members at no cost.

Even with these technologies, anecdotally speaking we are not consistently seeing volunteers respond back to calls. Unfortunately, we are not currently tracking this information in a reportable fashion so there is no bona-fide way to demonstrate this. We will enforce that members utilize Firehouse to track activities so data is more readily accessible in the future.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM - CURRENT AND PROPOSED COSTS

Volunteer Firefighter	Current	Proposed	
Recruitment and Testing	\$175.00	\$33,090.00	Enhanced background, medical and psych.
Benefits	\$9,384.00	\$9,384.00	
PPE	\$12,840.00	\$12,840.00	
Uniform	\$2,352.00	\$2,352.00	
Training	\$21,415.00	\$21,415.00	
Sub Total:	\$46,166.00	\$79,081.00	
EMS Only Volunteer			
Recruitment and Testing	\$175.00	\$33,090.00	Enhanced background, medical and psych.
Benefits	\$5,083.00	\$5,083.00	
PPE	\$689.00	\$689.00	
Uniform	\$897.00	\$897.00	
Training	\$4,154.00	\$4,154.00	
Sub Total:	\$10,998.00	\$43,913.00	
Other Costs:			
Reimbursement/Stipends	\$20,326.00	\$20,326.00	
Apparatus	\$28,517.00	\$28,517.00	
Station 151	\$161,563.00	\$161,563.00	
Program Coordinator	\$42,220.00	\$42,220.00	
Sub Total:	\$252,626.00	\$252,626.00	
Total Program Costs:	\$309,790.00	\$375,620.00	

Goals for 2017

Immediately improve documentation of all volunteer activities in Firehouse.

Staff Station 151 at 40% (model to be determined by the Board).

Ensure members provide 24 hours of service per month.

Ensure members respond back to calls.

Ensure attendance at a minimum of 75% of all drills.

Certify 25% of volunteer firefighters to IFSAC FFI.

Future of the Program

Increased Cost

It is expected that the cost of the Volunteer Program will increase starting in 2017 due in large part to the expansion of medical, psychological and background reviews. Staff believes these enhanced evaluations are critical to best manage the risks of the District.

Currently, career candidates undergo extensive evaluations to provide an adequate amount of information which staff uses to make hiring decisions. These evaluations occur near the end of the hiring process, after line personnel and staff have made their hiring recommendations. In the past five years, approximately five candidates (25%) have failed one of these final portions of the process. Staff eliminates these candidates because our members are held to the highest standards. Better to eliminate a potential problem than to deal with an actual one.

In the same time period, approximately 50 volunteer members have been hired. The Fire District is no less liable for volunteer members than it is for career members yet volunteer members are currently only subjected to cursory evaluations. The citizens of Fire District 6 expect us to ensure we are sending responders who meet our high standards. Historically, we have only become aware of problems with volunteer members after-the-fact, which in a worst case scenario could be too late.

Managing Turnover

Volunteer turnover continues to be a significant challenge for the program. Recruiting, hiring and training new volunteers takes significant effort and occurs at significant cost.

For the 5 years beginning January 2012 and ending December 2016, 46 volunteers have been hired. 30 of those volunteers have left, each averaging 1.4 years of service. Of the remaining 16, eight have less than one year of service and only one original recruit from 2012 remains.

Work needs to be done to determine why we have such turnover and what steps can be taken to reduce it.

Managing Training

Almost none of our volunteers are certified IFSAC Firefighter I, thus they are required to perform 240 hours of fire based training per year. Considering that volunteers also need EMS, ICS and WAC mandated training, it is not possible to meet this 240-hour threshold. This training

threshold is reduced to 180 hours if members are certified to IFSAC Firefighter I. To decrease our WSRB deficiency points, we must work toward certification.

The training division intends to offer additional drills approximately 10 times per year to help members achieve certification. The results of this trial will be reviewed near the end of 2017.

Staff, the Training Division and the Volunteer Program Coordinator all strive for excellence. If the Board chooses to have a volunteer program, we all want to have a robust and successful one. To ensure this, there will need to be adjustments made and difficult questions answered. We hope the Board shares this desire with us and look forward to your leadership.